



From : Joe Dorward
Sent : 23 September 2012
To : Adam Watson
Subject : Flying Visit

Adam,

Had a productive day on Mar yesterday. I got well into the plantation at the Gleann Eindh gate and it's much worse than I imagined. I'll add photographs to the website when I get back, but it looks like someone went on a rampage through the woods.

Then I parked at the Canadian Camp and visited the dump-site - not impressed by what I saw. They had, as expected, just filled in the hole and levelled it over a bit then planted some trees.

Then I walked downriver to Claybokie looking for ruins - I hadn't been down that way for decades, and I didn't look hard, but I did see a boundary wall on the haugh and some built walls up against the slope. Worth further investigation in the future. At Claybokie I followed the old track to Black Brig and went into the plantation there - again I'll add photographs next week. Then back through Gleann Laoigh to the car.

It was just after 2pm so I dropped in at Mar Lodge for a chat with David Frew. We didn't get into a lot of detail, but it was useful and constructive. They're calling what they've done "conservation thinning" (an attempt to make these plantations more natural) and

claim the use of the machines is the most efficient way of doing it and that all the cut trees are marked beforehand by someone on foot. We are never going to agree with them on the use of the monster machines in the woods and the damage they do. They've decided to do this 'conservation thinning' and decided to use the monster machines to do it - I expect we will see much more of it in the future.

I attacked the issue of track building on several fronts and think I may have had some success there on the issue of the engineered uniformity of them. I made the point that there was probably no need for the paths to be continuous uniform ribbons and that some finesse would make the work less obvious and the track more natural - I encouraged them to adopt a 'as little as possible' mindset.

I mentioned that I was unhappy about the 'improvements' at Corroun and Etchachan and he pointed out their statutory obligation to maintain cultural heritage which includes both these buildings and that they can't let them become unsafe. I did point out that what's been done was much more than making them safe. On a similar point he mentioned that they were not in favour of 'improving' the Garbh-choire shelter and that he knew they were in for a battle there and that he'd like to see it removed. I said I was in favour of that too, I suspect there is something we could do to help with that, but I did not say so.

We also talked about Derry Lodge, and his belief that they would have to bring it back into use as part of their statutory obligation to maintain it. He indicated that they'd like to do so with a light touch, I'm skeptical, but we'll see.

They also intent to remove the footbridge at Derry Lodge and reinstate the bridge downstream to protect the boggy haugh opposite Luibeg cottage for the obvious damage being caused by walkers trying to cross a boggy bit, and re-direct them along the bank of Laoigh Beag.

So that's the jist of it - Joe